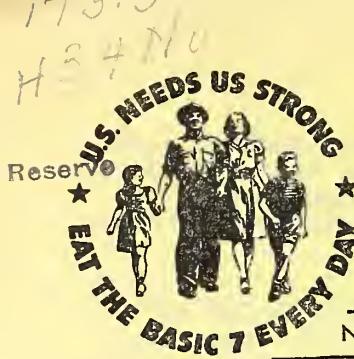


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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
*News Letter*

MARCH 1948

## FREEDOM GARDEN PROGRAM FOR 1948

The 1948 Freedom Garden Program Fact Sheet was sent you recently and an announcement of the National Garden Conference on February 2 in Washington, D. C., was sent earlier. Members of nutrition committees will want again to cooperate in their local garden campaigns and take the initiative in pointing out the fruits and vegetables which will contribute most in supplying the nutrients likely to be lacking in the diets in their communities.

Improving the health and nutritional standards of our people through gardening is still an important objective, although European recovery keynotes this year's national garden program. Secretary Anderson, in calling for 20 million freedom gardens in 1948, said that the Nation's backyard farmers, by adding their produce to the national food supply, can make a real contribution to the European Recovery Program.

Not that home gardeners will be asked to grow wheat and other grains needed for foreign relief. But they can accomplish the same thing by producing foods which aid in balancing our diets at home, and thus take the pressure of demand off grains and other foods needed overseas.

The National Garden Conference was highlighted by informal talks by Agriculture Secretary Anderson, Secretary of State Marshall, Treasury Secretary Snyder, Judge Marvin Jones, formerly War Food Administrator, and Dr. Thomas Parran, Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service.

Most of the afternoon was devoted to reports by representatives of organizations cooperating in the conference.

## A SURVEY OF HOMEMAKERS' INFORMATION ON NUTRITION

Last June, at the request of the Nutrition Programs Office, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, with the assistance of members of the Virginia Nutrition Committee, undertook a nutrition survey among homemakers in Richmond, Va.

This survey had three objectives:

(1) To measure the level of informa-

tion on nutrition among homemakers and to ascertain their attitudes toward nutrition; (2) to analyze the effectiveness of various media which are used in the dissemination of nutrition information; (3) to determine certain prime motivating factors which can be used as a basis for nutrition education programs among homemakers.

Methods.—The sample was a cross section of the metropolitan area of Richmond, the same area as was covered by a similar survey in 1943. Two homemakers, on an average, were interviewed in each of the 200 sample blocks selected.

The information was gained from detailed interviews. The interviews were analyzed on Hollerith cards, by using codes set up in cooperation with the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics.

Findings.—The survey showed that:

(1) Slightly less than half of the homemakers had some knowledge of the principles of nutrition according to the standards set up for the survey; a very small percentage had adequate information; and about half possessed little or none. This is about the same situation as obtained in the 1943 survey. About half of the homemakers in the sample provided an adequate daily diet for their families. A high proportion said they wanted more information about new dishes and recipes, but they did not show as much interest in information on nutrition, basic fundamentals of cooking, or how to buy food. (2) All common media—newspapers and magazines, radio, booklets and pamphlets, and classes and meetings—seemed equally effective as sources of information. The homemakers themselves, however, considered newspapers and magazines the most helpful, and more homemakers were reached by this medium than by any other. It was evident from the survey that a combination of media is more effective than any one used singly. (3) The majority of the homemakers felt that the most effective appeal in teaching nutrition to women is to point out (a) the importance of well-balanced meals

for the health and growth of their children; and (b) if they eat the foods they should, they will have more energy and live longer.

The data have been correlated with such factors as age, race, and economic situation, and are shown in tables included in the full report. This report, entitled "Housewives Acceptance of Nutrition Information in an Urban Community" by the Division of Special Surveys of BAE, is available in mimeographed form from that Bureau in the USDA, Washington 25, D. C. A summary was published in the Agricultural Situation for January 1948.

#### COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAMS

From time to time we have carried items describing spontaneous as well as sustained community programs dealing with some phase of nutrition. A few more examples of typical local projects follow.

#### Hartford (Conn.) Nutrition Committee

The Hartford Nutrition Committee offers a unique service to homemakers who desire personal help with food marketing problems. The committee distributes a leaflet "Tips on Trips to the Market" which provides space for the homemaker to list for a week all foods eaten at home, the foods bought for the family, the composition of the family, and her particular problems. When the homemaker fills out and sends in this leaflet, a nutritionist appraises the information given and returns it to the homemaker with a page of comments. The nutritionist signs her name so that the homemaker, if she so desires, can correspond further with her. One week after the service was announced, over 600 requests for the leaflet were received, Chairman Pearl M. Grandy reports.

The Board of Education, the Department of Health, welfare agencies, industry, restaurants, hospitals, Red Cross, YWCA, as well as the press and radio, are represented on the committee. Its purpose is the improvement of the "nutritional status of the community by stimulating interest in nutrition and by coordinating nutrition activities in a sound program of nutrition education."

The Committee's program of activities has varied with the needs of the community. For example, it prepared materials to be distributed with food stamps when the Food Stamp plan was in force, conducted a Packed Lunch Campaign when a

survey showed most factory workers were bringing their own lunch, and carried on a Better Breakfast Campaign when Hartford's citizens were showing the strains of wartime tensions.

#### Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Nutrition Service

Also basing its program on community needs is the Community Nutrition Service at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and many of its projects are the result of demands from various groups, according to Director Thelma Downing.

Because welfare agencies need statistics on food prices for planning food budgets and menus, the Service makes a monthly price survey of about 150 food items and calculates the cost per cup, tablespoon, and serving of each item.

At the suggestion of the State Public Health Department, it is carrying on a dental caries survey in 7th and 8th grade science classes in all schools. In this test, the saliva is collected and bacterial count made by sending the specimen to the State Hygienic Laboratory. The results are returned to the child's dentist, and teachers and dentists cooperate with the Service in remedial measures.

Twice each month children between the ages of 2 and 12 may have a free medical examination in the Service clinics by the attending physician. If the child needs care, he is referred to his family physician.

The group donates its services to teach a cooking school.

A check of industrial workers' lunches is being made. A second check later will measure progress made after a program stressing good lunches.

The Service also prepares material for teaching nutrition in grade and high schools; writes newspaper articles and radio programs; plans menus for agencies and private homes; answers questions on canning, cookery, and equipment; and at the request of physicians helps individual patients with special diets.

Its governing board is made up of 18 members from various allied fields, such as the Public School Health Department, Restaurant Association, radio, county relief agencies, the community house, Public Health, Red Cross, PTA, YWCA, and a doctor of dental surgery, three doctors of medicine, and five members at large.

#### Belmont (Mass.) Nutrition Council

Although improvement of individual health by establishing better food

habits is listed as its most important goal, the Belmont Nutrition Council also acts to meet special problems. For example, by issuing information about low-cost foods that can be used in place of high-priced or scarce items, it aids people in choosing an adequate diet in the face of present high food prices and the urgent need for saving food for export.

The Council determines the needs of the community by surveys and special investigations; then it organizes to meet these needs and makes use of all resources available in the community. It acts as an advisory committee to the Board of Health and jointly with the Health Department employs an experienced nutritionist on a part-time basis. This nutritionist is available as a consultant to agencies and professional groups in the community and helps individuals referred to her with special diet problems. She also prepares material for publication and makes talks at various group meetings.

#### A Washington (D. C.) Woman's Contribution

We were much interested in a unique contribution to the food conservation program that is being made by Mrs. C. I. Hendrickson, a homemaker who was formerly dean of home economics at Connecticut State College. The stories of hunger abroad and her own efforts to feed her family at costs within her budget prompted her to invite some of her neighbors in to discuss what individual homemakers could do. She wanted to establish the relation of food-buying practices of individuals to both the domestic and international food situation. Recipes and menus were reviewed in terms of grain-consuming products and substitutions of plentiful, low-grain-consuming items were discussed and suggested.

The sessions proved so helpful that Mrs. Hendrickson was soon invited to conduct similar meetings in other neighborhoods. In the meetings she emphasizes that food saving should be adjusted to the nutritional needs of the various members of the family and she stresses the Basic 7 food groups.

She found the women participating in the groups eager for information and counsel and feels that there is an opportunity for all home economists with a knowledge of nutrition to be of great service to their communities by making themselves available to lead such group discussions.

#### NEWS FROM STATE COMMITTEES

DELAWARE.—In an effort to improve lunches carried from home, the State Nutrition Committee promoted a Carried Lunch Week, October 13-18, according to Chairman Mary T. Davenport. A pamphlet entitled "The Lunch Hour Treasure Chest" was distributed by teachers, public health nurses, the State Grange, Visiting Nurses, the electric power company, Extension workers, and the American Red Cross and, in addition, copies were available for the taking in theaters, hospitals, and offices.

In the schools, home economics teachers devoted at least one lesson in every class they taught that week to carried lunches. A typical school project was one where, after a lesson on nutrition and food combinations, the girls brought in posters representing their ideas of a good packed lunch. In another school, the girls fixed up 8 or 10 trays with food and containers suitable for a carried lunch; these were then displayed to all the students.

Store window exhibits in several cities carried the slogan "Why be worn out at night? Carry the lunch that satisfies both eye and appetite."

Radio programs by Red Cross, Extension Service, and the State board of health further spread the story while films in schools and trailers in theaters strengthened the message.

CHICAGO, ILL.—"Chicago Nutrition Association Reporting" is the title of the Association's news letter which made its initial appearance with the October-November issue. It highlights the activities of the Association and reports news of interest to persons working in the field of nutrition. With it went a copy of the organization chart and a list of officers and chairmen of committees for this year.

The Program of Work Committee, consisting of chairmen of all special committees, is responsible for planning and coordinating the program of the Association. Each special committee will plan its program so that its work will further the objectives of the program.

The School Lunch Committee arranged to have reprinted and mailed to all Cook County schools serving school lunches the menus and market guide for A and B lunches for 1 year. This material was prepared by the Chicago Board of Education.

The Chicago Nutrition Association took an active part in a public conference on

nutrition sponsored by the Chicago Medical Society on October 1. Other cooperating organizations were Friends of the Land, Institute of Medicine, and the Illinois State Medical Society. The all-day session included talks by well-known authorities about various aspects of nutrition and a round table during which the speakers answered questions from the audience.

At the fall meeting of members of the Association, Dr. Lydia J. Roberts of the University of Puerto Rico spoke on "Patterns of Living in Puerto Rican Families With Particular Reference to Diet."

NEW YORK STATE.—A permanent program, with emphasis on long-time nutrition goals as well as on the needs of the present emergency, was outlined by Dr. Herman E. Hilleboe, chairman of the New York State Food Commission, at a conference December 16 and 17 of chairmen of nutrition committees of 57 counties. The conference was called by M. Eunice Hilton, Director of the Commission's Up-State Regional Office in Syracuse, to establish direct contact between the Commission and county and local agencies to help lay the foundation for the organization of communities needed to carry out the program.

The world food problem as seen in Europe was presented by Marjorie S. Hunt of Utica and as seen in China by Helen K. Stevens, executive secretary of United Service to China. Dr. K. L. Turk of Cornell University described the Animal Feed Program of the Food Commission; Dr. Catherine J. Personius, also of Cornell, spoke on Cornell University's contribution to the human nutrition program; while Dr. Granville W. Larimore, assistant to the chairman of the Food Commission, outlined the specific fields which county nutrition committees should explore to implement the State emergency food-conservation program. He suggested investigation of the adequacy of school lunch programs, industrial plant and institutional feeding, hotel and restau-

rant feeding, diets of special racial groups, general food preparation practices, per capita consumption of milk, and the availability of cheaper or alternate foods.

In a panel discussion under the topic "State Organizations Share Responsibility for Solving the World Food Program," representatives of the American Red Cross, various State departments, and health associations explained the responsibilities their agencies have in solving world food problems. A general session was devoted to publicity and public relations and included talks on tips for working with radio and both the city and rural press.

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Dr. Day Monroe, formerly chief of the Family Economics Division of BHNHE, has returned to accept a temporary assignment as head of consumer service work in the Consumer Division of the Office for Food and Feed Conservation. This work, started under the leadership of Katharine Fisher, has been transferred to the USDA.

Eleanor Davis has a temporary appointment with the Extension Service here. She will keep in touch with State Extension nutritionists on matters relating to the food-conservation program. Miss Davis is on a year's leave of absence as Extension nutritionist at Washington State College.

Sincerely yours,

*M L Wilson*

M. L. Wilson, Chief,  
Nutrition Programs

*W H Sebrell*

W. H. Sebrell, Consultant